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NORTH-SEMITIC EPIGRAPHY.¹

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Semitic epigraphy has to deal with documents comparatively few of which are of great intrinsic interest. Such finds as the Mesha stone, the record of the making of the Siloam tunnel, or the Zengîrli inscriptions are unfortunately as yet exceptional. The sameness of the Semitic inscriptions, however, rendered them all the more capable of being dealt with satisfactorily in a handbook, while it emphasized the need of such a manual.

The construction of a handbook could not be undertaken hopefully till the labors of many skilled workers had prepared the way. It was the great work of Boeckh that made it possible for Franz² to provide students with a manual which, whatever its imperfections, was for many years indispensable to the student of Greek epigraphy, until its place was taken by the manuals of Reinach,³ Hinrichs, and Larfeld.⁴ Even in English we now have Part I of E. S. Roberts's *Introduction to Greek Epigraphy* (1887), and, for Latin, J. C. Egbert's useful *Introduction to the Study of Latin Inscriptions* (1896).

When so much attention had been given to Semitic inscriptions, it may seem strange that we had to wait so long for a

¹ HANDBUCH DER NORDSEMITISCHEN EPIGRAPHIK NEBST AUSGEWÄHLTEN INSCRIFTEN. Von Mark Lidzbarski. Weimar: Verlag von Emil Felber, 1898. I, Text, xiv+508 pp.; II, Tafeln, xlv pp.

² *Elementa epigraphices Graecae* (1840). ³ *Traité d'épigraphie grecque* (1885).

⁴ In Iwan von Müller's *Handbuch der klassischen Altertumskunde*, 1st ed., 1836, and 2d ed., 1892.

text-book.⁵ This is less surprising, however, when it is recalled that, as recently as in 1881, Hübner could say, "There is no 'text-book' of Roman epigraphy which can be offered to the student" (the work was waiting for Hübner himself).

That the handbook of Semitic epigraphy, when it came, should be dedicated to Theodor Nöldeke and Julius Euting was eminently fitting. If the selection of the writer was not so obvious, the world has set the seal of its approval to the self-appointment of the scholar who eventually undertook the task. Mark Lidzbarski, born in 1868, of Polish extraction, educated at Berlin, now Privatdocent at Kiel, was perhaps best known by his edition of a Syriac text of the "Story of Aḥikār," but was known to Semitists by other writings.⁶

The task of determining the plan and assigning the limits of the introduction to epigraphy which Lidzbarski purposed to write cannot have been easy. There were, of course, the recent handbooks of Reinach, Hinrichs, Hübner, and Larfeld to serve as models. The conditions of the problem, however, were not quite the same; and the great difference, for example, between the handbooks of Hinrichs and Larfeld demanded a well-considered judgment.

The conditions of the problem, we have said, were not quite the same. The inscriptions in, let us say, the *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum* are in different forms or stages of the same language. Those in the *Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum* are in several dialects so distinct that they are commonly, and on the whole correctly, treated as languages. The cuneiform legends on clay tablets have characteristics that mark them off from other inscriptions, and the Assyrian script may be practically regarded as absolutely distinct from all the Semitic alphabets.

The predominant feeling one has in writing of Lidzbarski's book is that of gratitude to the author, and a wish to do anything one can to increase, if possible, its utility. Lidzbarski's work is excellently done. Any suggestions in regard to small points of

⁵ At least there was no Zell to be warned against.

⁶ The following writings may be named here: *De propheticiis, quae dicuntur, legendis Arabicis: Prolegomena* (Diss. Berlin.), 1893; "Zu den arabischen Alexandergeschichten," *ZA.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 263-78; "Text des Ša'b du'l-Ḳarnain aus Ibn Hišām," *ZA.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 278-311, 410; "Beiträge zur Grammatik der neuaramäischen Dialekte," *ZA.*, Vol. IX, pp. 224-63; "Zum weisen Achikār," *ZDMG.*, Vol. XLVIII, pp. 671-5; *Die neu-aramäischen Handschriften der königl. Bibl. zu Berlin in Auswahl herausgegeben, übersetzt und erläutert*, 1895; cf. *Geschichten und Lieder aus den neu-aramäischen Handschriften der königl. Bibl. zu Berlin* (= "Beiträge zur Volks- und Völkerkunde," 4. Bd.), 1896.

detail that we may make are not criticisms. The second edition, which we are sure will be called for, will easily put things right. The author resisted the temptation to hold back his book indefinitely so as to bring it nearer perfection. For this he deserves nothing but praise. The early appearance of such a work was more important than the later appearance of a work still riper.

For the reader it is unfortunate that the chrestomathy (and album) had to be made after the *Handbuch* proper had been prepared. We presume that is the reason why cross-references are freely given back to the handbook, but not forward to the chrestomathy. Hübner expressly warns the student that no satisfactory use of his handbook is possible unless the reader has constant access to the *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*. It is a pity that Lidzbarski's own little corpus could not have been made to go farther than it does. It remains, till the second edition appears, for the lecturer to remedy the defect by giving the student the necessary references from his own marked copy.

The student will find absolutely indispensable each of the three main portions of which the work consists: (1) the handbook proper, consisting of bibliography (eighty pages) and systematic account of inscriptions; (2) a glossary with two appendices, the first dealing with the sounds and word-forms, the second classifying the more important words according to their meaning; and (3) a selection of inscriptions, given in ordinary Hebrew characters in the printed volume, and (most of them) in facsimile in the companion album.

The author is to be congratulated on his success in providing what was wanted: a general treatment, comprehensive, accurate, concise, immediate. The eighty pages (5-83), with six pages of addenda (493-8), of bibliography that Lidzbarski gives are a striking proof of the great need of such a general treatment of Semitic epigraphy.

The entries being so many—no fewer than 1,234—the method of reference adopted is probably the simplest available. The student will find that he can save some time, however, by constructing a skeleton key to enable him to know on what page of the bibliography the work referred to is given.⁷ The device of indicating on the margin the language of the inscriptions dealt with in the work cited is excellent.

⁷ This may be done by writing in upright columns the two sets of figures: N 1, 7, 18, etc., and p. 5, 6, 7, etc.

What is practically a further supplement to this bibliography is now accessible in Lidzbarski's *Ephemeris*, Vol. I, pp. 228-34.

In regard to the comprehensiveness of the work, there is no reason to question the accuracy of the author's description. The work includes the whole linguistic material of the inscriptions dealt with. The exclusion of coins from the handbook proper was just as sound a decision as the inclusion of their vocabulary in the glossary (*cf.* the plan followed in the *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*).⁸ The statement in the preface (p. v) that the vocabulary of written texts is included is a little vague. The promise to include in the second edition the Aramaic and Canaanite contained in Greek and Latin literature and inscriptions and in cuneiform documents is acceptable. The exclusion of cuneiform inscriptions themselves must meet with general approval. Nor should fault be found with the exclusion of south Semitic. The author's plan was to complete the survey in a second volume, and his astonishing industry has happily enabled him to carry out his purpose: the work is expected in the near future.

The historical sketch of Semitic epigraphy (pp. 89-110) overcomes with considerable success the difficulty of dealing with so ramified a subject in an interesting and yet perspicuous manner. Such points as the comparison of Barthélemy's transcription of the Carpentras Aramaic inscription with that given in the *Corpus* (ii, 141) are instructive. Gradually one sees the whole field brought into the range of vision and marks the various stages of the advance. The first mention of the inscriptions (Sinaitic) by Cosmas Indicopleustes (p. 91, note 2); the first publication of one of them (Palmyrene) in the earliest⁹ of "the twelve" thesauruses (the work mainly of that learned, if not

⁸ Admitted in Vol. I (before Cæsar), excluded elsewhere. The inclusion of the non-Semitic (usually Greek or Latin) text in bilingual inscriptions follows the good example of the *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*. There are even trilinguals (Table X, 4; Table XLIII, 10).

⁹ In passing we may note that the year Lidzbarski gives as the date of Gruter's work, 1616, is neither a misprint (for he notes the synchronism with the finding of the Palmyrene Tayyibe inscription, p. 89, note 3) nor a mistake. Of the two copies of the work in the Bodleian Library, one is entitled *Inscriptiones antiquae totius orbis Romani in corpus absolutiss. redacta*, and bears on its title-page no date, while the other is entitled *Inscriptionum Romanarum corpus absolutissimum*, and bears on its title-page the date 1616. The date usually given, 1603, is that found in both copies on the page (facing Pag. I of the inscriptions) bearing imperial and royal decrees: "Imposita ultima manus Operi XIII. Septemb. CIO IOCHII." Moreover, the copy with the undated title-page has, inserted before the appendix, a title-page, "Inscriptionum antiquarum Appendix," bearing the date 1603, followed by a page bearing the following: "Sciat Lector folium istud ideo tantum appositum esse ut consuleretur decoro. Ideoque impunè tolle posse a biblioega." The title of the 1707 edition follows that of the undated edition.

quite critical, Dutch son of an English mother); the first Phœnician inscription published (1735); the rapid finding of many such; the contrast between Swinton and Barthélemy; the work of Kopp (*Bilder und Schriften*, 1819–21); the monumental treatise of Gesenius (*Scripturae linguaeque Phœniciae monumenta*, 1837) summing up the work of a century (1735–1837), in the very year in which Judas was sent to Algeria to swell enormously the number of known inscriptions (in another field, the practical solution of the problems of the Sinaitic inscriptions, by Beer, *Inscriptiones veteres, etc.*, 1840, and the vain attempt of Forster, *The One Primeval Language, etc.*, 1851, *The Israelitish Authorship, etc.*, 1856); the discovery of the Marseilles Tariff (1845), and at last (1855), after a century and a half (1697), of an inscription of great interest and importance in the Phœnician homeland—on the Egyptian sarcophagus appropriated by Eshmunazar, king of Sidon; the discovery in the same year, again after a century and a half (Carpentras stele, pub. 1704), of another old-Aramaic inscription on a dedicated object at Memphis (1855); Renan's mission to Phœnicia (1860); the twenty years' labors of Spano in Sardinia; the Ninevite seals, etc., on which de Vogüé based his weighty discussion of the development of the alphabet ("L'alphabet hébraïque et l'alphabet araméen," *Rev. asiatique*, New Series, Vol. XI, pp. 319–41 [1865]); de Vogüé's *Syrie centrale* (1868–77); the decision of the "Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres" to undertake the preparation of a *Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum* (1867); in the following year the discovery of the "Moabite stone" (1868) and the discussions resulting therefrom; the much-used treatise of the Bērūt consul-general (P. Schröder, *Die phönizische Sprache*, 1869); in the same year the important inscription of the king (יהויכין) of Byblos; Mordtmann's additional Palmyrene inscriptions (1870); the French operations at Carthage which led to the Pricot de Sainte-Marie collection of Punic votive tablets; Kautzsch-Socin's much-used edition of the Mesha inscription (1876), and the travels in Arabia of Doughty (1876–78); Sachau's discovery of the palæographically interesting Zebed trilingual inscription (1879), and the discovery of the great Tariff inscription (by Abamelek-Lazarew, in 1882) in the year following that of the issue of the first volume of the *Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum* (1881); Huber and Euting's Aramaic inscriptions from

north Arabia (1884), in the year after the discovery of antiquities at Zengīrli, which led to the work of the Orient-Komité (1888 *sqq.*) and brings us into the stage of the campaign which we see developing about us.

To all this, and much more that Lidzbarski tells us, we can now add that it all at last becomes for the first time really accessible by the help of his own *Handbuch*.

The account of the geography of the inscriptions which follows the (in the main chronological) historical sketch is extremely serviceable. One only wishes there could have been some sketch maps. Of the technical details on pp. 123-9, and the account of spurious inscriptions, we need not say anything here except that they manifest the same excellences as the rest of the work. (The same is true of the following section entitled "Personalien.") The critical student of the Old Testament will find much instruction here. See also p. 142, note 2, and, for a careful study of an illegible text, Lidzbarski's re-examination of the Mesha inscription in his *Ephemeris*, Vol. I, pp. 1-10, which might, had it been made in time, have been included in the *Handbuch*.

The next part (pp. 137-72), discussing the various classes of inscriptions—funereal, votive, historical, etc.—forms a very useful introduction to the subject.

The section (pp. 173-203) devoted to a description of the development of the Semitic alphabet in its various branches is admirable. The student who will read it, with the excellent tables of alphabets given at the end of the album before him, will find it a valuable guide as to what to note in studying the alphabets comparatively. To facilitate this process he will do well to mark on his copy of the text the number of the column in which the forms under discussion are given in the album. It was a good idea to point out from time to time modern equivalents of ancient phenomena. That might have been done oftener. Some of the descriptions are difficult to follow. It is a pity that the reader had to be left to discover for himself whether a given inscription is represented in the table or not. The cause of this omission, which will no doubt be removed in a second edition, is referred to above. The discussion of the alphabet must now be supplemented by what the author has written in his *Ephemeris* (Vol. I, pp. 109-36) and by his article "Alphabet" contributed to the *Jewish Encyclopædia* (Vol. I, pp. 439-54), 1901.

The idea of including a complete glossary was good. Its arrangement in two parallel interdependent columns—Aramaic and “Canaanite”—is ingenious and useful. Making the “Canaanite” depend on the Aramaic by the use of arrows, with their points toward the left,¹⁰ is justified by the result. It is true, as Halévy suggested (*Rev. sémi.*, Vol. VII, p. 99), that printing the two vocabularies in parallel columns must have added to the cost of the *Handbuch*; but the increase is probably slight in such a work, and the advantage, which Halévy himself admits, in our opinion more than compensates.

While a scholar, like Lidzbarski, prefers to dig down as deep as possible, a glossary to inscriptions prepared by one man must necessarily be based in general on inscriptions as published, not on the inscriptions themselves. Wherever he could, however, Lidzbarski has tested the correctness of the decipherment. In particular, users of the *Handbuch* should note the appendix B, b, 1, on pp. 487–91, where are given what Lidzbarski believes to be better readings of some sixty Palmyrene inscriptions published in 1875 by Mordtmann. This kind of work the author is continuing in his *Ephemeris*; see in particular his invaluable study of the text of the Mesha inscription (Vol. I, pp. 1–10).

In the matter of proper names it is not only the convenience of the reader, but also the interest of progress, that has been considered. Under חלץ (Can.), for example, there is a list of names ending in חלץ; similarly under בעל (ארץ), אל, ישע, מלך, נחן, etc. We are not sure that we have come on a case where the article on a word that occurs somewhere as the second component of a proper name does not give a cross-reference to that name.¹¹

The glossary is thoroughly serviceable. The present writer has found it invaluable. Those who reap the benefit of its use should report to the author the cross-references and other notes that they have found it desirable to insert in their copies. It is important to copy the addenda to the glossary given on pp. 500–504 into their places, or, if not, to remember their existence. The same is true of the additional list of some eighty new proper names occurring in the new part of Vol. I of the *Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum* given in *Ephemeris*, Vol. I, pp. 34–7.

¹⁰ It was surely an oversight not to explain the meaning of the arrows. Pp. 358 and 360 will exhibit the system: arrows pointing toward the main article, whether the Aramaic or the “Canaanite;” dashes indicating connection with the article above.

¹¹ If בעל־ידי is not given under ידי or ידיא, the reason probably is that the genuineness of the inscription said to contain it is at least uncertain (*CIS.*, Vol. I, p. 181).

The analysis of sounds on pp. 389–95 is so useful that it would be quite worth while to insert cross-references to it throughout the glossary; *e. g.*, under each of the letters of the alphabet dealt with and in the cases where there is an interchange of letters, such as in פִּלְהִירוּחָא, where there should be a cross-reference to p. 393, ר.

The classified vocabularies on pp. 405–12 are a most valuable help to the investigator in other fields, quite apart from their use in a systematic study of the subject-matter of inscriptions.

The user should add to the list of abbreviations the constantly cited T = the long Tariff inscription found (by Abamelek-Lazarew) in 1882 at Palmyra, and should remember that the complete text of this inscription is given in ordinary Hebrew and Greek characters at pp. 463 *sqq.* and a specimen (the introduction) in facsimile on Plate XXXIX, No. 3, in the album.

The seventy pages (415–85) of inscriptions, classified according to language, and then according to place, are simply invaluable. The selection is excellently made, and there are no less than 275 of them; and all of these, except some twenty-one, are given, in whole or in part, in the beautiful album of facsimiles. This album is beyond all praise, and reflects the greatest credit on author and publisher, and all others concerned in its production.

The student should make himself at home in the chrestomathy. He will do well to begin by numbering successively in some distinctive way (say by Arabic numbers inclosed in a circle) the 275 inscriptions. Then he should construct for himself a list showing on the right these new numbers and on the left the numbers in the *Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum*. From this he can construct an index arranged according to the *CIS.*, Vol. I and Vol. II. He will now be ready to mark in the text all through the handbook the Lidzbarski number of the (*CIS.*) inscriptions cited. The same system may be applied to other collections of inscriptions (*Syrie centrale*, etc.) and finally to individual inscriptions. No doubt, as we have said above, the author will do this and other things in the second edition; we hope he will add an index.

To sum up: a knowledge of epigraphy is becoming every day more necessary; it has now become possible for the ordinary Semitic student to obtain a working acquaintance with it in his own study; for this we are indebted to the scholarship, industry, and skill of Lidzbarski, and the enterprise and ability of the Weimar publisher, Emil Felber.